

Dover 9 Medway 16 (London South 1) - 28th November 2015

Medway travelled to Dover on Saturday to face a side sitting near the bottom of the league but whose results show they have been competitive in many of their games and unfortunately for them, all too often on the wrong side of narrow score lines. This game proved no different, Dover were a close match for the Medway outfit, and had they been more clinical in finishing good scoring opportunities in the first half, might have gone on to win the game. Medway on the other hand, fought hard, ground out a difficult victory, and were pleased to come away having avoided a potential banana skin.

Just as the game commenced, the heavens opened, and down came the inevitable rain. Medway had chosen to play up the slight slope and into the elements. Dover had the better of the opening exchanges and put their visitors under pressure. After 7 minutes Dover looked to move the ball wide and a handling error presented Dan Harvey with a loose ball on his 22 metre line. His initial break was halted by a good tap tackle, but he offloaded to Luke Burns who showed great pace to run 60 metres to score the only try of the game under the posts. Harvey's conversion put Medway 7 – 0 up.

Dover went back on the offensive and showed good continuity and tempo in their play as they stretched Medway's defence. Handling errors at crucial time squandered good scoring opportunities but they were rewarded with a penalty after 11 minutes to reduce the deficit to 7 – 3. Dover went close again after 17 minutes but steadily Medway got into the game and established good field position and a regular supply of possession. Medway went through phase after phase showing excellent patience but the Dover defence and discipline held firm and the visitors could not extend their lead. On the stroke of half time Dover stole Medway ball in mid field and their breakout was rewarded with another simple penalty to make the score close, 7 – 6 at the interval.

The second half started badly for Medway as full back Charlie Wardzynski was sent to the bin after only 2 minutes and the penalty kick was converted by Dover to give them a 9 – 7 lead. This didn't last long as Medway's forwards started to dominate their opponents and Dover were penalised at regular intervals. Harvey narrowly missed a penalty after 6 minutes but was back on target after 9 minutes with an excellent long range kick to put Medway back in the lead 10 – 9.

Medway huffed and puffed but couldn't break down the excellent Dover defence but they did increase their lead on 20 and 27 minutes via penalty kicks from Harvey, 16 – 9. Dover had periods of good

possession and continued to play with tempo and continuity. However, Medway's defence was equally good, and the hard fought game finished with no further scores.

Another good performance from the whole team who worked well together to grind out the victory in miserable conditions! Man of the match went to Tom Beaumont for another tireless performance on the flank.

Third placed Medway travel to league leaders Sutton and Epsom next week in what is sure to be a very tough game.

Medway team;

Petch, Sandison, O'Leary, Easton, Weobley, Huntley, Beaumont, Ebanks, J Dance, Harvey, Chalmers, Burns, Liua'ana, Garofalo, Wardzynski, Subs; Morant, Fernyhough, Catlin.